

## Proposal for 2006 LITA National Forum

*Tatyana Zaytseva*

*Library Information Center, Khazar University, Azerbaijan*

### **Access to Online Recourses is Vital Force for the Khazar University Development**

#### **On the Information Abyss**

The integration of the Internet into our daily lives affects no single profession as completely as that of the librarian. For centuries, information has been archived and accessed through a single location, the library. Immediate access to online information, direct dissemination of information as it is created, and interaction and creation of information online, all from the home or office- these are revolutionary and anarchical concepts. Very few among us still deny the pervasiveness of online information access. There are many examples, including experience of the developing countries too.

The World Wide Web has simplified access to electronic resources. In Azerbaijan if a library today doesn't already provide this service to its patrons, it is likely that staff is in the process of planning to do so. The simplicity of a point and click approach, and the appeal of attractive and colorful graphics have captured the imagination of both library staff and users. Reference librarians have found the Web to be a rich source of information to supplement print and other resources available to them.

For librarians the Web is no longer a novelty, but is quickly becoming an indispensable tool. Staff with access to the Web has the advantage of consulting essential resources from their desktop to help in doing their jobs more efficiently and effectively.

Khazar University Library Information Center (KU LIC) providing access to variety of electronic resources, trainings, professional consultations, and assistance.

Our librarians turn out packets of information on demand, yet think not of transferring to the seeker any but a modicum of skills in using the OPAC or periodical indexes. The Internet, with its nearly full menu of online information, offers delivery at home, without waiting in line, or forming the query into the suitable jargon of the library world.

Khazar University is one of some few in Azerbaijan where Dewey Decimal organization of knowledge, AACR, Library of Congress Subject Headings are our bastions and tools with which we carve our living.

In our reality the user is now ensconced in his or her own library courtesy of the Internet, then we need to teach them not only how to be minimally functional with the necessary tools and techniques, but in essence to be their own librarian. Internet users, expected to learn complex indexing systems and to create their own archives of information via bookmarks and downloaded files, will need to operate on the same skill level as professional reference librarians. Our traditional library orientations and our series of the Internet workshops are going to do the job.

Our librarians do the work of translating the seeker's information queries into the appropriate research method, and then present the most likely set of tools to employ. Bibliographic instruction transfers only this understanding of task-oriented tools to the learner. The librarian would serve the student best if we taught the process of defining the information query, of designing the entire research strategy, and then moved on to selection and evaluation of research tools.

The librarian as expert needs to teach the independent, online information seeker more than any particular set of skills to attain information literacy. The Internet user faces a constantly changing body of "information," radically different from the information traditionally warehoused in libraries, with tools that reflect the thinking of computer programmers, far different from that of librarian catalogers. The true disposition of the expert information seeker, librarian and Internet user alike, must adapt to these shifting values. The constant evaluation required, comparing the apparent, or the external, with the required, or the internal, is the essence of critical thinking, and is the stock in trade of the librarian.

### **Just Inside the Online Door**

The most part of our Electronic Resources Directory is the final outcome of what was initially known as the eIFL Project. The impetus for the Project was a desire the Library's growing number and range of electronic resources, comprising online services, networked and EBSCO databases, electronic journals etc. in developing countries.

Accesses to online databases, electronic resources, online inter-library transactions and digitized abstracting and indexing services have revolutionized the way information at the Khazar University.

Ten years ago, libraries in Azerbaijan predominantly contained print materials to meet research requirements, but today the Internet and computers have provided the potential to access huge amounts of global information. Today's society is in the middle of a technological boom. Customers can either choose to take advantage of this era, or simply let it pass them by. An access to the online resources is a very powerful tool.

At the Khazar University attempts to use EBSCO databases were undertaken as early as 2000. But it was only start. Than was the interval length in some years. The most part of advanced librarians clear understood that these services will pose new challenges for all types of libraries, including our. But at that time our Community wasn't ready for EBSCO databases implementation yet.

Because of the success we have had, we are able to invest in new technology and keep the University moving forward. It allows us to offer a wider array of products and services. The synergies between EBSCO Publishing and EBSCO Subscription Services allow us to provide a fully integrated information systems and services approach. We feel this gives us a unique position in our country poor marketplace.

Among the services LIC is providing, there is the provision of guidelines to support the teachers and students s in their EBSCO activities.

During last months the most popular has been becoming online serrvices via the Khazar University forum. There are EBSCO presentation (ppt), online resouces from various databases for study courses, supporting library staff.

This is a big boost for the libraries, especially in our country, which are running very low on budgets. But the information available from these initiatives is scattered. It is imperative that the sources of these free and open access scholarly publications are identified and made available to the researchers.

Another unique opportunity is the *Open Access Journals*. As The Erasmus University of Rotterdam has added to its library catalog all the open-access journals from the Lund Directory of Open Access Journals, we have continued this initiative to add more than 250 titles too. Our computerized library catalog provides access to the full text journals via Internet. These issues were chosen in accordance with Khazar University strategy development. Thus we can help our students and researchers discover, use, and enjoy online resources in all academic fields freely available on the Internet.

Author presented this initiative at Twelfth International Conference “Crimea 2005” **“Libraries and Information Resources in the Modern World of Science, Culture, Education, and Business ” on June 4-12, 2005** (Ukraine, Sudak). Author of this story was a speaker at this conference. My paper - “University Electronic Information Resources and Services: Achievements and Problems (by the Example of Khazar University)” was given. It explored the benefits of EBSCO databases and online services, and examines some different online services.

Thanks to eifl.net and other online projects I'd say our key advantages are superior quality and quantity of full text; comprehensive collection of secondary databases; seamless linking between secondary and full-text databases and between all the databases and external sources of full text; an easy-to-use, fast, and reliable service that offers sophisticated search tools if the user wants to use them, but doesn't require them to; and finally, something I think is very important: a customer service orientation that provides training and support to our customers—something that isn't so common among companies these days.

The whole area of electronic journals and improved systems to enable immediate access. In the old print world, when we placed an order we were advised that we could expect to receive the first issue in 10 to 12 weeks. In the electronic world, we think this kind of fulfillment is unacceptable. We think and hear that there's a significant need for improved systems on all fronts: ordering, payments, invoices, authentication, and access.

The information resource market—tools, content and access—is growing, not shrinking, providing more options and more choices to people using the Web to search for information and content. Information consumers are willing to experiment with new resources and incorporate them into their expanding repertoire of information tools. In our country, as in a whole world, people continue to read, but they do it less as they add other ways of consuming information and content to their lives.

We consider that in nowadays libraries are seen as a place for traditional resources (books, reference materials and research assistance) and electronic resources.

Unfortunately, in Azerbaijan libraries awareness of electronic databases and electronic materials at the library is very low. This opinion was confirmed the outline of the **Country Report** under CALIMERA project (Culture Applications Local Institutions Mediating Electronic Access), and also results of the survey among Khazar University faculty, students, and public.

Respondents were asked to indicate if their library provides various types of electronic resources. Results indicate that awareness among respondents is low for most of the library's electronic resources. For example, the most part of all respondents (75%) are not sure if their library offers access to online databases.

The most respondents are not sure if the library has the electronic resources. For example, only 8 percent of respondents indicate the library has audio and video resources, and just 4 percent indicate they are aware that their library has electronic magazines/journals. Most do not use the library Web site where access to free electronic resources is made available.

The survey highlighted that the most Azerbaijani youth are not familiar with library electronic resources, but are very familiar with search engines, e-mail and chat. As more content becomes directly accessible via search engines, familiarity with more and different types of digital content is likely to increase. Search engines are the favorite place to begin a search and respondents indicate that Google in Azeri is the search engine most recently used to begin their searches.

The survey results confirm that library is used for borrowing books, access to reference materials and research assistance. Respondents clearly want to be able to visit the library, but they want the traditional and electronic services to be more convenient.

The survey revealed how information consumers make choices about electronic information resources; and how they evaluate those resources and make decisions about the quality of resources available from libraries and generally on the open Web. Respondents indicated that search engines deliver better quality and quantity of information than librarian-assisted searching—and at greater speed. As more and more content becomes digital and directly accessible via search engines, quantity will increase. The amount of quality information, overall, is also likely to increase. Quality and quantity of information delivered are the highest determinants of overall information search satisfaction.

### **Azerbaijan Library Information Consortium**

New impetus for electronic information services development were widely adopted when eIFL has had a new focus: supporting the creation of library consortia in member countries. The same consortium was established in Azerbaijan on December, 2003. Khazar University became one of the founders of Azerbaijan Library Information Consortium (AzLIC).

Today, Azerbaijan Library and Information Consortium consists of 13 institutions, including major libraries, academic institutions and international NGOs.

For public libraries, academic libraries and public non-profit organizations in Azerbaijan EBSCO is amazingly affordable due to a partnership between AzLIC and eIFL.net consortium. The local cost to subscribe to EBSCO is the lowest and appropriate to the status of the country as Azerbaijan's being a developing country.

EBSCOHost is especially important for all types libraries in Azerbaijan because it gives our community access to thousands more magazines that we could normally afford to buy. For the price of 3-4 best sellers, we can make this wonderful information resource available to our community, accessed 24/7 from home or work. AzLIC actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents. Access to full text databases supports this important role.

During last year and beginning of this year, AzLIC member has signed several agreements with various online publishers as part of eIFL.net Science and Technology project. These are listed in the table below.

#### **Full Text Databases Subscribers**

Name of publisher	Date of agreement	Number of subscribers	
		Before eIFL	After eIFL
EBSCO	February 2004	-	13
IOP	August 2004	-	2
CUP	May 2004	-	6
Proquest	May 2004	-	5
American Physical Society Journals	May 2004	-	2
Oxford University Press	August 2004	-	7
BioOne	August 2004	-	3
HighWire Press	January 2005	-	1
HINARI	December 2005	-	1

AzLIC had a variety of different activities, such as the following:

- Trainings for local members as well as partner institutions, such as training for participants of US Embassy Regional Library Development Project
- Participation of two members of consortium – National Library and Khazar University in Gutenberg Project, which aims to digitizing Azerbaijan public domain literature in Latin Script
- Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperation with the Georgia Integrated Library Consortium
- Training for AzLIC members in Lithuania to learn experience of Lithuanian Research Library Consortium
- Partnership with American Library Association, which covered half of Azerbaijan EBSCOHost country fee, within its project funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Involvement to CALIMERA Project . Work is carried out by Khazar University LIC staff to translate the CALIMERA Good Practice Guidelines Summaries into Azeri (now is available from Azerbaijan country page on the CALIMERA website:( [www.calimera.org](http://www.calimera.org) ) and prepare the Country Report together with National eifl.net Coordinator.